

10 Independent Living

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HOME & COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Most older adults prefer to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. 'Home and Community-Based Services' refers to the array of supportive services that can help individuals do this. If you are interested in obtaining care at home, included is a general description of some of the home and community-based services that may be available in your area.

These services can be accessed through New Jersey EASE (Easy Access Single Entry) county agencies by calling 1.877.222.3737. Case managers are available to help determine and coordinate the care and services needed by elderly individuals.

Services & Programs

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES | Adult Protective Services helps protect vulnerable adults who are being subjected to abuse, neglect or exploitation and cannot fully protect or care for themselves.

HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELING | Trained volunteer counselors assist Medicare enrollees of all ages with questions, problems and claim forms related to Medicare, Medigap and Long-Term Care Insurance.

ADULT DAY HEALTH SERVICES OR SOCIAL ADULT DAY CENTERS | Seniors spend the day in a supervised group setting where they receive social, recreational and/or healthcare support, and return to their homes in the evening.

MONEY MANAGEMENT | Seniors receive guidance and confidential assistance with bill-paying, budgeting, check writing, reconciling bank accounts and managing financial matters to maximize their independence. This program is offered in about one-third of New Jersey's 21 counties.

RESPIRE CARE | This program gives caregivers a break from the daily responsibility of caregiving for an elderly or disabled relative or friend.

TRANSPORTATION | Various programs will transport eligible older persons to and/or from community facilities and resources, and medical offices for the purpose of acquiring or receiving available services, benefits or entitlements.

NEW JERSEY EASE

(EASY ACCESS SINGLE ENTRY) IS AN EASY WAY FOR INDIVIDUALS TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE THE SERVICES YOU NEED, PLEASE CALL 1.877.222.3737.

In-home Services

FRIENDLY VISITOR | This service provides regular visits to socially or geographically isolated older individuals for purposes of providing companionship and social contact.

HOME DELIVERED MEALS/MEALS ON WHEELS | This service offers nutritionally adequate meals which provide, at a minimum, one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance to older persons in their homes.

HOME HEALTH CARE | This includes a broad range of services and trained professionals (in the field of nursing, health care, therapy and social work) who come to the homes of seniors requiring assistance with health care.

HOMEMAKER SERVICES | This helps an individual with personal and household needs, such as cleaning, laundry and meal preparation. These services are often available from the same agencies that provide home health care.

HOSPICE CARE | Hospice services are provided to individuals with terminal illnesses and their families. Services are most often provided in homes, but can be provided in hospital and long-term care settings. Skilled nursing, health care professionals, social workers and spiritual and bereavement specialists provide care to the ill individual and the family.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE | This service provides regular telephone calls to home-bound older persons to assure their well being and safety and also provides social interaction and psychological reassurance.

Accessing Programs & Services

New Jersey EASE (Easy Access Single Entry) is an easy way for individuals to get information about services for older adults and receive assistance when applying for benefits or funded programs. Calls to NJEASE are answered by trained staff within your County Office on Aging.

Program Eligibility

All seniors and their families, regardless of income, are eligible for NJEASE information and assistance, outreach and care management services. Eligibility requirements for other services and programs vary. Contact NJEASE at your County Office on Aging or the State Information and Assistance Senior Helpline (both at 1.877.222.3737) to find out if you or someone close to you qualifies for a particular service.

Cost of Programs

NJEASE information and assistance, outreach and care management services are free. Fees for other services and programs vary. A person may have to pay for all or part of the expense. Contact NJEASE or the organization providing the service directly to inquire about individual finance responsibilities or funding assistance.

CONGREGATE HOUSING SERVICES PROGRAM

The State-funded Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) provides selected supportive services to low-income, frail elderly tenants of subsidized housing facilities. The program combines shelter and services to help those elderly who need some assistance as they age in place. The program is intended to extend the time span during which older persons can live independently.

Many frail elderly benefit from the freedom and independence that the congregate housing services program affords them. Older adults can remain in their accustomed residence with dignity and freedom of choice because they are assisted with the daily tasks that they may no longer be able to complete by themselves.

Available Services

The CHSP provides a nutritionally balanced meal served daily in a group setting, light housekeeping and service coordination. In addition, the following services may also be available and vary by site:

- Laundry
- Shopping
- Personal Care
(assistance with
bathing or dressing)
- Linen Change
- Meal Preparation
- Companionship
- Heavy Chores

Eligibility

To participate in this program a person must be a tenant in an affordable housing building that currently has a CHSP contract with the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services.

Program Benefits

- Supports independent living and prevents unnecessary institutionalization
- Maintains good health of tenants by providing personal and nutritional services
- Prevents apartment deterioration by providing cleaning services
- Provides opportunities to socialize

Program Cost

The cost of the CHSP is shared between the State and participants. The tenant's CHSP co-pay varies according to his or her adjusted income and the amount of services purchased. A sliding scale is used to determine what percent the participant will be responsible for and what percent the State will reimburse. Additional subsidies to further reduce the cost are allowable.



**FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON
INDEPENDENT LIVING,
PLEASE CONTACT
THESE RESOURCES:**

**THE COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING/
STATE INFORMATION HOTLINE**
NJASE: 1.877.222.3737

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES
DIVISION OF AGING &
COMMUNITY SERVICES**
P.O. Box 807
Trenton, NJ 08625-0807
1.800.792.8820 (toll-free for
NJ residents only)

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF DISABILITY SERVICES**
222 South Warren Street
P.O. Box 700
Trenton, NJ 08625-0700
1.888.285.3036 (toll-free)
609.292.7800
609.292.1210 (TDD)
[www.state.nj.us/human
services/dd](http://www.state.nj.us/human/services/dd)

HOME MODIFICATION & REPAIR

Home modifications are adaptations to the home that can make it easier and safer to carry out activities such as bathing, cooking and climbing stairs. **Repairs** are alterations to the physical structure of the home to improve its overall safety and condition.

Home modifications and repairs:

- Help prevent accidents such as falls
- Allow people to remain in their own homes as they age
- Facilitate caregiving
- Can be a substitute for more costly personal care services
- Accommodate lifestyle changes and increase comfort

Financial Assistance for Home Modifications & Repair

While some modification and repair programs charge for alterations, there are programs that provide services free of charge or at reduced rates for eligible older adults and persons with disabilities.

- The local Community Development Department in your city may use block grant funds to help citizens maintain and upgrade their homes.
- Rebuilding Together is an organization that, in partnership with the community, rehabilitates the homes of low-income homeowners, particularly people with disabilities, the elderly and families with children so that they may continue to live in warmth, safety and independence.
- Local welfare agencies and community action programs offer programs such as Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Weatherization Assistance Program, which provide funds to weatherize (i.e. insulate) the homes of lower income persons.
- County Office on Aging can use funds from the Older American Act Title III to modify and repair homes. This office can also refer you to programs such as the 'Handyman Project' which uses the skills and talents of volunteers to perform minor home repairs and maintenance.
- Some local lenders and banks offer reverse mortgages that allow homeowners to turn the value of their home into cash, without having to move or make regular loan payments.
- Some of the Medicaid Waiver Programs in New Jersey reimburse for environmental modifications.

It is also important for tenants who are renting a home or apartment to realize they can make reasonable environmental modifications to their homes and the landlord cannot refuse such alterations.

COMMON IN-HOME PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

Problems

- > DIFFICULTY GETTING IN AND OUT OF THE TUB OR SHOWER, AND/OR SLIPPING IN THE TUB OR SHOWER
- > DIFFICULTY TURNING FAUCET HANDLES AND DOORKNOBS
- > DIFFICULTY ACCESSING THE HOME
- > INADEQUATE HEATING AND VENTILATION
- > DIFFICULTY CLIMBING THE STAIRS

Solutions

- > INSTALLING GRAB BARS, SHOWER SEATS, TRANSFER BENCHES AND NON-SKID STRIPS OR DECALS IN TUBS OR SHOWERS
- > REPLACING DIFFICULT FAUCETS OR DOORKNOBS WITH LEVER HANDLES
- > INSTALLING RAMPS FOR SUPPORT
- > INSTALLING INSULATION, STORM WINDOWS AND AIR CONDITIONERS
- > INSTALLING HANDRAILS FOR SUPPORT

Home Modification & Repair Assistance

There are several ways to modify and repair your home. You can do the alterations yourself with help from a friend or relative, hire a handyman or contractor to do the work or contact a home modification and repair program.

County Offices on Aging, senior centers, independent living centers, county welfare boards, the Department of Health and Senior Services or the Department of Community Affairs can help locate home modification and repair programs in your area.

If you decide to use a contractor, consider taking these steps.

- Get recommendations from friends who have had similar projects completed.
- Hire a licensed and bonded contractor and be specific about what changes you wish to make. Make sure the contractor is insured against claims covering workman's compensation, property damage and personal liability in case of an accident.
- Ask for a written agreement, with only a small down payment. Make the final payment only after the project is completed.
- Check with your local Better Business Bureau regarding the contractor's reliability and performance record.



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services/dds)

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Generally, seniors want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. However, they often find that their physical environment is no longer adequate for their needs and their daily routine may become difficult and potentially dangerous. It is important to take a look around your house, or the home of someone close to you, and examine the environment for possible hazards.

The following is a sample checklist for you to use around the house or apartment to ensure safety.

Bathroom

- ☐ Can you get in and out of the bathtub or shower with ease?
- ☐ Is a hand-held showerhead installed for your use?
- ☐ Are there grab bars where you need them to be?
- ☐ Is the hot water heater regulated to prevent scalding?

Driveway & Garage

- ☐ Are there adequate parking spaces available, with appropriate lighting?
- ☐ Are there ramps to improve access to the home?

Electrical Outlets

- ☐ Are electric switches easy to turn on and off?
- ☐ Are smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed in appropriate areas, with working batteries?
- ☐ Is there an alarm system and/or a telephone readily available in case of emergency?
- ☐ Can the doorbell be heard throughout the home?

Floor Surfaces

- ☐ Is the floor surface safe or is it slippery and likely to cause falls? Are there rugs or doormats that may be dangerous throughout the house? Throw rugs are tripping hazards and should be removed or securely fastened.

Kitchen

- ☐ Are the everyday appliances convenient and safe, including the oven and refrigerator?
- ☐ Are the oven controls and refrigerator doors easy to use?
- ☐ Is there a place to safely sit while working in the kitchen?
- ☐ Are faucets easy to turn off and on?

Lighting & Ventilation

- ☐ Is lighting located in areas such as the front door and stairways, and bright enough for safety?
- ☐ Is the home adequately ventilated?
- ☐ Are flashlights available for emergencies?

Steps & Walkways

- ☐ Are the stairways in good condition?
- ☐ Are there handrails on both sides of the stairway?
- ☐ Are the steps themselves deep enough for one's entire foot to fit?

Windows & Doors

- ☐ Are the windows and doors easy to open and close?
- ☐ Are locks sturdy and easy to operate?
- ☐ Are doors wide enough for walker or wheelchair to pass through?

For more information or additional copies please contact New Jersey EASE (Easy Access Single Entry), toll-free at 1.877.222.3737, the State's Senior Services Helpline at 1.800.792.8820 (out of state callers: 1.877.222.3737), or visit the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services Website at www.state.nj.us/health/seniors.htm.

State of New Jersey | Richard J. Codey, Acting Governor
 Department of Health and Senior Services | Fred M. Jacobs,
 M.D., J.D., Commissioner

Department of Health and Senior Services Division of Aging and
 Community Services
 P.O. Box 807 Trenton, NJ 08625-0807

